

SANE AUSTRALIA

SANE Australia Online Peer Group

Date: 18/11/2021

Title: Negativity Bias

Description: Have you ever noticed a tendency to notice negative things more than positive? This is known as a negativity bias. Let's come together to explore what a negativity bias might mean for us and look like in our lives, as well as how we might be able to challenge or combat it!

TideisTurnin
g (PSW)

Hi everyone! Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about negativity bias. First, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we are all joining this event from. We pay deep respect to the Elders of those Countries, past and present, and we further extend that respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people joining this

group tonight. This always was and always will be Aboriginal land. This is a new peer support service we are running! Because of this, we really value your thoughts on how it goes, so we will send a link to a short survey at the end of this chat for you to complete. While this survey is optional, it is a chance to provide feedback for us to improve our services. In case you might need to leave part way through the event, you can access the survey here now:

https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW

Tonight, peer support workers @TideisTurning and @Earthling95 will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of negativity bias. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both- anyone can benefit from thinking about the potential for a tendency to see more negative than positive. We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. Some of the conversation could be heavy in nature as we may talk about our mental health struggles.

@Jynx, who moderates on the SANE Forums, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see

our FAQ

(<https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs#what-if-i-am-having-a-tough-time-and-need-immediate-support>).

find an answer to your question there, please message @Jynx directly. We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn together and expand our ideas of negativity bias, how it might show up and the impacts it can have, as well as how we might be able to challenge or harness it! Lastly, just so you're aware, the transcript of this group will be made available for download afterwards on SANE's Peer Support website.

Shaz51

Hello @TideisTurning (PSW) be back soon

**TideisTurning
(PSW)**

Welcome! We'll be starting the discussion shortly and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join 😊 In the meantime, feel free to introduce yourselves! I'm @TideisTurning

**earthling95
(PSW)**

I'm @earthling95! Nice to e-meet you :)

**Jynx
(Moderator)**

Hey folks! Nice to be back again

I'll get us started with our first question :) What is your understanding of what a negativity bias is?

TideisTurning
(PSW)

RiverSeal
(PSW)

the magician

Hi, I'm @RiverSeal! Looking forward to a great nite. :)

hi people

earthling95
(PSW)

earthling95
(PSW)

the magician

Hmm..for me, it's a feeling of getting sucked into the Bermuda Triangle- only focussing on negative experiences and emotions, especially when I am venturing into a situation that has previously brought up uncomfortable feelings. Those feelings provide a weird sense of comfort, which in turn makes me want to not get out of my comfort zone. Oof what a cycle!

Hi @the magician :)

when things aren't going your way.

TideisTurning
(PSW)

the magician

RiverSeal

(PSW)

TideisTurning
(PSW)

the magician

I think of negativity bias as a tendency to see and focus on negatives more than positives.

hi right back

For me I think negativity bias is when you are have negative thoughts predominantly more than positive.

How do you notice negativity bias showing up in your day to day life?

it sucks your inner energy

earthling95
(PSW)

earthling95
(PSW)

It truly does @the magician. It's a never ending battle.

I think for me it pops up as "I should not think/feel like that"

Jynx
(Moderator)

I think it is most noticeable on 'bad' days - i.e. stuff that wouldn't usually bother me as much might be way more irritating if I've already had other negative experiences that day. Headphones catching on a door handle anyone?

Shaz51

When negative take over everything in your daily life

RiverSeal
(PSW)

I get a feeling of negativity which I don't necessarily notice straight away because it creeps up on me.

earthling95
(PSW)

Trying to fall asleep at night whilst scrolling on Instagram..

Shaz51

Happens every day @Jynx (Moderator) as my Mr shaz was brought up in a negative family

Jynx

(Moderator)

That's rough @Shaz51 - a tough pattern to break free of for sure.

the magician

then you sleep to overcompensate how you're feeling and end up unproductive and overtired

Shaz51

@RiverSeal (PSW) I see it everyday here

the magician

afraid to take risks

Shaz51

It sure is @Jynx (Moderator) makes it hard as a wife

RiverSeal

(PSW)

@Shaz51 It's challenging when someone normalises it for themselves

Jynx

(Moderator)

(That is a hug emoji by the way @Shaz51)

TideisTurning

(PSW)

It sounds like we've touched on it a little already, but how do you find negativity bias impacts you?

earthling95

(PSW)

My inner harsh critic becomes loud- I tend to have a 'black or white' thinking.

Jynx

(Moderator)

Makes it harder to see the good things sometimes

RiverSeal

(PSW)

I find that things start to not go my way and that's maybe my negative vibe coming across.

the magician

like a snowball life and people just not liking me at those times

earthling95
(PSW)

Yes. I catch myself looking at the world from that lens and dont allow myself to feel the full spectrum of emotions!

Shaz51

Very true @RiverSeal (PSW) , always things start going wrong

the magician

light at the top of the hill in any situation

TideisTurning
(PSW)

Positivity bias may be thought of as the opposite of a negativity bias and describes the tendency to think and focus on positives. How might positivity bias show up in your life?

the magician

changing your mood by how you think about the situation

Hmm this is a tricky one. I haven't seen my family in 2 years as they are overseas. I am often told 'to be grateful' for the life I have here, there are many in the same situation as me. That's 100% true,However, I can love my life here and still express grief and frustration.

earthling95
(PSW)

There is always space for 'AND'.

..

Shaz51

@TideisTurning (PSW) I am the postive in our relationship

the magician

i keep a gratitude journal reflections mostly

RiverSeal
(PSW)

Being to open to accepting things the way they are and not questioning or asking for what you want could be focusing on positive bias.

earthling95
(PSW)

Can definitely relate to that @RiverSeal (PSW)

the magician

i find those relatives who are a little stigmatized i am less open specific with. by changing my approach to be more general the relationship i positively and everyone's more comfortable. they even embrace the crazy auntie magician as a good thing without detail.

Jynx
(Moderator)

I suppose if positivity bias could be a full-on 'bias' it might be always trying to find the bright-side, but in a way that means you're not practicing acceptance or allowing space for feeling negative. I definitely have found myself affected by what is sometimes referred to as 'toxic positivity culture' in this sense.

Shaz51

Yes learning to be grateful together daily at the end of the day for whatever happens

the magician darkness can be so useful in creative zones like art and poetry

earthling95
(PSW)

Embracing the good and bad- one day at a time :)

Shaz51

Yes my husband does not visit his family much and does not like to share things with them as they are very negative,

the magician

its all part of the journey

RiverSeal
(PSW)

@the magician the metaphoric darkness can be a create space at times

the magician

with an element of light too. like singing when at worst. recapturing space.

BPDSurvivor

Hi everyone! In relation to the above question, I tend to want to look at circumstances in a positive light e.g. people are upset , I like to point out what IS working

TideisTurning
(PSW)

Yes! That's incredible @the magician

earthling95
(PSW)

That can be so incredibly helpful @BPDSurvivor :)

Jynx
(Moderator)

Welcome @BPDSurvivor good to have you here! Yes a totally wonderful thing to practice

BPDSurvivor

I think i've lived too long in depression (with a strong negativity bias) so that I've swung to the other side of the pendulum

TideisTurning
(PSW)

Hey @BPDSurvivor :)

**RiverSeal
(PSW)**

@BPDSurvivor That is a great perspective to have and to hold for the people :hugging:

the magician putting pen to paper not only helped me but made me a writer

Shaz51 That is it my @BPDSurvivor do it daily so it will become a habit

BPDSurvivor I do, however, think I need a balance of positive/negativity bias

BPDSurvivor But the positivity bias DOES make me feel better.

BPDSurvivor In other words, it's working for me

the magician a lot of negatives are all about self perception anyway

earthling95

(PSW)

"I am trying my best" is my go to mantra on days where i need a dose of positivity bias.

RiverSeal

(PSW)

@BPDSurvivor Both views defiantly have a place in life

TideisTurning

(PSW)

How might a positive bias have a negative impact?

BPDSurvivor People get annoyed if you're always positive, positive, positive...and maybe not as validating as they'd like?

the magician develop 5 happy factors in your week things that you can rely on to change negative vibes

RiverSeal

(PSW)

I know that I'm not as open to the world as I could be sometimes and that could be due to my own bias

the magician a time to be happy a time to be sad.....

earthling95

(PSW)

Yes- I have felt very minimised and dismissed. I try to give people the benefit of doubt but it can still be a lot to sit with.

**RiverSeal
(PSW)**

@the magician great idea to have strategies to change your bias

the magician

its hard when people don't get how /what you're feeling

Shaz51

Yes people gets annoyed with me being postive all the timm too

**earthling95
(PSW)**

I have found it helpful to tell my loved ones what comes up for me when im distressed. For example- when im overwhelmed, I tend to space out and that's when I need extra TLC

BPDSurvivor

Some people get offended if you turn all their experiences into 'positive' situations...

**RiverSeal
(PSW)**

You might overlook situations where you need to be cautious being to positive
I find being an advocate can end up with a Taylor Swift type reputation I call it. who I actually really like but she gets a lot of negativity from people

the magician

who don't know her.

Shaz51

That is soo true @RiverSeal (PSW) That is why it is good to write up the pros and cons of things

BPDSurvivor

But then again, I get offended and annoyed at people who are always negative!!!

BPDSurvivor

Yes @Shaz51..... need pros and cons

**TideisTurning
(PSW)**

Do you have any ideas how you might be able to become more aware of when negativity and positivity bias may show up in your life?

**earthling95
(PSW)**

Social media can be a confusing space. We all are living our best lives on Instagram I guess.

**RiverSeal
(PSW)**

@Shaz51 I've done that recently and it really helped make decisions

the magician

listening to when a conversation has a fake sound?

Shaz51
Jynx
(Moderator)

Also the wording and the tones in the question @the magician
Reminding myself that life is about balance, duality, and sitting in a space where I try to notice if I'm going too far in one direction or another but not judging myself for that

RiverSeal
(PSW)

I think you need to be aware of your bias to keep focused on your best outcomes. Having your bias eye on!!

earthling95
(PSW)

It can be hard to keep a track of the 'internal chatter'. I am trying to make room for the uncomfortable feelings whilst reminding myself to breathe. I can't change the world or my life overnight- trying to practice this active surrendering.

Shaz51

@Jynx (Moderator) with me I do not like to react too quickly, like to think about it before deciding as long as it does not go on too long

the magician

groups have common elements wherever you go its navigating them. the ones you gravitate towards and ones you steer clear.

BPDSurvivor

Sometimes it is good to have a person who have point out positive/negative bias when it rears its head

TideisTurning
(PSW)

How might you be able to challenge negativity or positivity bias when it shows up in an unhelpful way?

RiverSeal
(PSW)

@BPDSurvivor I recently had a friend point out my negative bias and they were right I was being too negative but I hadn't realised it.
Creeps up sometimes!

the magician

having rain music around my shoulders helps concentrate 100% so internal negative chatter cant seep through

BPDSurvivor

Very true the magician

earthling95
(PSW)

That's an awesome strategy!

RiverSeal
(PSW)

@the magician Background sounds are great for keeping the chatter at bay

the magician be cynical/pragmatic about what you accept?

earthling95
(PSW)

Music can be therapeutic, especially when it comes to processing emotions.

BPDSurvivor

I have a mentor, and have been told that it is good to stay objective in some situations, otherwise emotions taint situations

TideisTurning
(PSW)

Having someone you trust to help provide an unbiased opinion is huge @BPDSurvivor

RiverSeal
(PSW)

@BPDSurvivor Objective is a great word to use to keep the balance between negative and positive bias

Jynx
(Moderator)

For sure @BPDSurvivor - I sometimes have to remind myself that everything that happens is completely neutral, and it is us humans who put a positive or negative value on them. Something I actively work on being aware of in my life, but it's an ongoing process!

the magician

making things happen and having go to people

TideisTurning
(PSW)

Yes @Jynx (Moderator)! :)

earthling95
(PSW)

Definitely. I find it helpful telling my loved ones when I want to 'feel heard' or just externalise my thoughts by getting them out of my system. or if I need advice/guidance

the magician

sometimes you need someone to listen without fixing just to talk it through out loud

earthling95
(PSW)

Being heard can be incredibly healing @the magician

TideisTurning
(PSW)

Absolutely! Someone's presence alone can be super powerful @the magician

Shaz51

Same here @earthling95 my loved ones knows when I am thinking about things and when I want to share them

TideisTurning
(PSW)

How might you be able to harness a negativity or positivity bias when it may be beneficial in your life?

RiverSeal
(PSW)

@earthling95 Letting people know you want to feel heard is an important thing to do

the magician

recognise that it's serving a purpose for a reason or season.

earthling95
(PSW)

Listing down pros and cons can be helpful- the act of writing down my thoughts on paper can be a grounding feeling sometimes.

the magician

finding alternative strategies when things go wrong. win win.

Jynx
(Moderator)

I think noticing if I'm feeling a bias one way or another can be a good way to gauge where my mental health is currently at

RiverSeal
(PSW)

I think it's definitely a good skill to have to be able to set out to have more positive or negative bias. Setting a goal/action for the day or so is a good way to benefit from your bias.

earthling95
(PSW)

Also..normalising the fact that there will always be a bias!

BPDSurvivor

Yes earthling95! Good point!

BPDSurvivor

Making a point of accepting bias

the magician

i think getting to the core of how /why I'm feeling a certain way helps decide what action I want to take

RiverSeal
(PSW)

@BPDSurvivor acceptance of your own bias is a strength in know yourself

BPDSurvivor

:)

TideisTurning
(PSW)

Have you learned anything helpful from others' experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what was it that you took away? 😊

earthling95
(PSW)

Sometimes it can be hard to sit and rationalise or intellectualise my emotions. Learning one day at a time to let it flow and be compassionate towards myself.

BPDSurvivor

I think it has been mentioned before, but we need to look at the situation and determine what bias is more suitable for the outcome you want

the magician just be

BPDSurvivor I've learnt that 'negative bias' doesn't equate to 'bad', and 'positive bias' doesn't equate to good. Each has their place.

RiverSeal (PSW) I've learned that we all seem to share a similar opinion about the need for positive and negative balance in life.

TideisTurning (PSW) For me, I think recognising that a tendency toward a positive or negative bias exists for a reason that serves a purpose

BPDSurvivor I also think it served as a purpose as part of evolution....

Shaz51 Yes I have learnt that we need both positive and negative in our lives

BPDSurvivor help early day man kind to survive

BPDSurvivor cavemen couldn't just be positive about everything

TideisTurning (PSW) **Tonight's topic could have brought up some uncomfortable feelings as we talked about negativity and positivity biases. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do? 😊**

earthling95 (PSW) I've learnt that we all are trying our best to be mindful about our biases and navigate ups and downs of life.

RiverSeal (PSW) @BPDSurvivor A natural response to the world around us

the magician diet ice cream or chips and a bath

earthling95 (PSW) I will be keeping away my phone (fingers crossed) and try to sleep early!

BPDSurvivor

Catch up on reading :)

Shaz51 Cuppa time

**Jynx
(Moderator)** Probably having some take away and having a chill one

**RiverSeal
(PSW)** I'm going to have a nice dinner and relax with some Netflix for my self care tonight

Shaz51 Going to watch a show about Devon and Cornwall coastlines
the magician I'm going to also write and read

Shaz51 @Jynx (Moderator) ha ha we had 2 minute noodles tonight for dinner
**TideisTurning
(PSW)** [We'd like to invite you to complete a survey reflecting on your experience in this Peer Group Chat- we'd love to hear any feedback you may have. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation!](https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW)
link: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW

**Jynx
(Moderator)** @Shaz51 Ahh yummo! hehe

the magician thanks people for chatting see you in 2 weeks

**earthling95
(PSW)** Hope you all have a restful night :)

BPDSurvivor Thank you for tonight everyone!

**earthling95
(PSW)** Thank you for sharing <3

Here are some further resources on negativity and positivity bias you might like to have a look at:

**TideisTurning
(PSW)** <https://www.verywellmind.com/negative-bias-4589618> <https://positivepsychology.com/pollyanna-principle/>

RiverSeal

(PSW)

Awesome nite everyone. Thank you

Jynx

(Moderator)

Always a pleasure to hear everyone's thoughts and experiences! Take care folks <3

TideisTurning

(PSW)

[Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion. If you'd like to be informed when our next Peer Group Chat will be taking place, you can also ask a question for our next topic, which will be talking about Toxic Positivity and you can read the transcripts of all our previous topics too 😊](#)

